

CATHOLIC BISHOPS SUPPORT PROMISE KEEPERS

May 25, 1997 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) -

The Buffalo News (New York), May 17, 1997, contained a report on the upcoming Promise Keepers conference in that area. Following are excerpts from this report:

"Although the movement is perceived to be largely Protestant, [Bill] McCartney [PK founder and chief executive officer] said during a news conference in the Buffalo Christian Center that **PROMISE KEEPERS HAS THE APPROVAL OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, USES SOME CATHOLIC SPEAKERS AND WELCOMES CATHOLIC MEN, INCLUDING PRIESTS.**

"THE ORGANIZATION'S NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ALSO INCLUDES A CATHOLIC, MICHAEL TIMMIS of Grosse Pointe, Mich., McCartney pointed out.

"The bishops' position, contained in a 1996 position paper prepared by its Committee on Marriage and Family, indicates that Catholics may participate in Promise Keepers events. The conferences, the paper suggests, may 'be filling a spiritual and pastoral vacuum' in the lives of some Catholic men and challenged church leaders to develop programs to meet those needs.

Bishop Henry J. Mansell of the Buffalo Catholic Diocese said Friday that 'Catholics are free to attend the Promise Keepers conference.'

"It is his hope that after the conference there will be follow up experiences in their home parishes,' said Monsignor David M. Lee, diocesan director of communications.

"McCartney said that for Catholic men and other Christians, there are only two criteria for attending the conference: Do you love Jesus and have you been born of the Spirit of Jesus Christ?

"I BELIEVE PROMISE KEEPERS IS THE VEHICLE GOD HAS CREATED TO BRING DOWN BARRIERS IN WESTERN NEW YORK,' said the Rev. Dean Weaver, pastor of Knox Presbyterian Church in Kenmore, during the news conference.

"In addition to more than a dozen ministers who appeared with McCartney at the news conference, the PROMISE KEEPERS GATHERING WAS ENDORSED EARLIER FRIDAY BY MONSIGNOR JAMES E. WALL, vicar for priests for the Catholic diocese and director of the St. Columban Retreat Center, Derby.

"TO HELP CATHOLIC MEN PREPARE FOR THE CONFERENCE, MONSIGNOR WALL SAID HE WILL CELEBRATE A MASS at 2 p.m. June 13 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart

Church, S. 3148 Abbott Road, Orchard Park" (Dave Condren, News Religion Reporter, Buffalo News, May 17, 1997)

WE WOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THIS INTERESTING REPORT:

FIRST, INDEPENDENT BAPTISTS AND OTHER BIBLE-BELIEVING FUNDAMENTALIST CHRISTIANS WHO ARE PARTICIPATING IN PROMISE KEEPERS HAVE NO EXCUSE FOR THEIR COMPROMISE. Pastor Billy Hamm, Mountain State Baptist Temple, Denver, Colorado, a leader in the Baptist Bible Fellowship, spoke at a Promise Keepers seminar in 1996. Pastor Jerry Falwell, who claims to be a fundamental Baptist, hosted a Promise Keepers conference at his Liberty University in 1996. (Former Baptist Bible Fellowship president John Rawlins and former Baptist Bible Tribune editor Jim Combs joined Falwell's ministry in 1995.) Pastor Bill Rudd, Calvary Baptist Church, Muskegon, Michigan, chairman of the Council of Eighteen for the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, has authorized several bus loads of men from his church to travel to Promise Keepers conferences the past three years. We frequently receive reports of other allegedly fundamental Baptist men who have participated in the Promise Keepers movement. When we have contacted some of these men and attempted to discuss this issue with them, they have responded that they are merely trying to help their men be better husbands, that they have seen no doctrinal error in the PK meetings they have attended, and that their participation with Promise Keepers is not a doctrinal compromise. (Some, praise the Lord, have repented of their involvement with PK.) The previous report from Buffalo, New York, reveals how shallow these protests are. The Bible commands us to mark and avoid those who cause divisions contrary to the doctrine which we have been taught in God's Word (Rom. 16:17). Certainly this means that God forbids us to fellowship with a movement which accepts Roman Catholic bishops and priests as brothers in Christ. These men call themselves fathers in spite of what Jesus Christ warned (Matt. 23:9); they claim salvation is through baptism and sacraments; they pray to Mary and believe she is the Queen of Heaven; they conduct masses for the dead; they claim that the Lord's Supper is a re-sacrifice of Jesus Christ; they honor the pope as the vicar of Christ; they believe in purgatory and innumerable other unscriptural dogmas. All of these are standard Catholic doctrines confirmed by the Vatican II Council and restated in the New Catholic Catechism. It would be a great deception to claim that Catholic bishops and priests do not believe these false doctrines. When priests are ordained, they are required to take a vow of obedience to the Catholic faith and a vow of submission to the authority of the pope of Rome. This one vow alone is a blasphemous denial of the Word of God. If a man takes such a vow, he is in open rebellion to the Word of God. If he takes the vow but does not really agree with Rome's doctrines, he is a liar. Either way, he must be marked and avoided in obedience to God's Word.

SECOND, PROMISE KEEPERS LEADERS IGNORE THE DANGER OF FALSE CHRISTS AND FALSE GOSPELS. PK Founder Bill McCartney said there are only two criteria for attending the conference: "Do you love Jesus and have you been born of the Spirit of Jesus Christ?" This might sound acceptable, but it ignores the fact that a man can love a false Jesus and can have a false view of the new birth. The Apostle Paul warned of this in his second

epistle to the Corinthians: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him" (2 Corinthians 11:3-4). There are multitudes of professing Christians who claim to be born again, but by that they mean they have been baptized and sacramentalized. The Roman Catholic Church, for example, teaches that men are born again through baptism. Thus, when a Roman Catholic thinks of his new birth, he thinks of his baptism. "The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are 'reborn of water and the Spirit.' God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism..." (New Catholic Catechism, 1257). When the Roman Catholic thinks of Jesus Christ, he thinks of the wafer of the Catholic Eucharist which, he has been taught, becomes the very body and blood of Christ during the process of the mass. "The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice: ... 'In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and offered in an unbloody manner'" (New Catholic Catechism, 1367). Thus, a devout Catholic man will "love Jesus" and will think of himself as born again, but he does not mean by this that he is born again in a biblical fashion, that he was lost in his sin, that he repented and trusted the finished work of Jesus Christ to justify him fully, that he has complete salvation in Jesus Christ today and that he knows he is eternally saved apart from his works and the sacraments of the church.

Our article "The Promise Keepers-Roman Catholic Connection" is available in the O Timothy Computer Library. It can also be viewed at the Way of Life Literature web site <http://wayoflife.org/~dcloud/special/spec0017.htm>

At the Way of Life there are dozens of other articles exposing the error of the Promise Keepers movement web site.